

Effectively Communicating the Gospel, Part 2 - Acts 26:4-8 – May 30th, 2010

- Here in chapter 26 we will continue our study as we examine how the Apostle Paul makes his defense before King Agrippa.
- By way of introduction, Paul is still in Caesarea where he's been falsely accused and even unjustly imprisoned for the last two years.
- He's appealed to Caesar and will be sent to Rome, but not before standing before King Agrippa so Festus can get a legitimate charge.

- This is part two of a series titled; "Effectively Communicating the Gospel." We're uncovering key components to Paul's brilliant defense.
- The Apostle Paul is sort of rising from the pages of our Bible's as an example of how we can effectively communicate the Gospel.
- It's important we understand, these are principles for effectively communicating the gospel as well as effectively communicating period.
- Suffice it to say that these are effective communication skills and, communication musts, in order for us to be effective for Christ.

1. Receive their permission (Verse 1a)

- Luke tells us that King Agrippa gives Paul permission to speak, without which he couldn't have this grand opportunity to preach Christ.

2. Show them respect (Verse 1b)

- Remarkably after receiving permission to speak we're told that Paul salutes with his hand as a show respect for King Agrippa's position.

3. Acknowledge the privilege (Verse 2)

- Paul says he's fortunate to stand before Agrippa. He deems it a privilege to present his defense because he can now defend the faith.

4. Establish common ground (Verse 3a)

- Paul establishes common ground by telling Agrippa he's fortunate to also be well acquainted with Jewish customs and controversies.

5. Be very patient (Verse 3b)

- Paul then begs King Agrippa to listen to him patiently because he's keenly aware that this is going to require patience for all of them.

6. Share your testimony (Verses 4-5)

4 "The Jews all know the way I have lived ever since I was a child, from the beginning of my life in my own country, and also in Jerusalem. 5 They have known me for a long time and can testify, if they are willing, that according to the strictest sect of our religion, I lived as a Pharisee.

- v4 Paul tells him that the Jews have known how he's lived his life from when he was born to when he moved to and lived in Jerusalem.
- v5 Paul goes on to say that they can testify, if they are willing, that he lived as a Pharisee according to the strictest sect of their religion.
- What's Paul doing here? He's telling his life story and he starts from the beginning when he was born. This could take a long time!
- Actually, Paul is sharing his testimony as he leads up to how it is and when it is that he met Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.
- He's saying that as a Pharisee he was very religious and because Agrippa was well acquainted with them, he would have known this.

- Here's what we can learn from the beloved Apostle; "never underestimate how powerful your story of coming to Christ is to others."
- One reason sharing your testimony when communicating the Gospel is so powerful is they can't argue with your salvation experience.
- Be that as it may, this is both a communication skill and a communication must if we want to be effective in winning people to Christ.
- When people see that God can save us, it gives them hope that God can save them too, whether they're religious, a wretch or both.
- Paul mentions this when he writes his first letter to the church in Corinth. He in effect reminds them of who they were before Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 9 Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders 10 nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. NIV

7. Proclaim God's promises (Verses 6-7)

6 And now it is because of my hope in what God has promised our fathers that I am on trial today. 7 This is the promise our twelve tribes are hoping to see fulfilled as they earnestly serve God day and night. O king, it is because of this hope that the Jews are accusing me.

- v6 Paul then says that it's because of his hope in God's promise to their forefathers that he is still on trial on that day before Agrippa.
- v7 He says that they've been hoping to see this promise fulfilled because it is this very hope in God's promise that he's falsely accused.
- In other words, the very reason Paul is on trial in the first place is because God has fulfilled His promise of sending them their Savior.
- Paul sort of rounds a corner as he goes from talking about who he was, to who God is, and what God has done in fulfilling His promise.

- I suggest that how Paul says what he says is the perfect and brilliant wisdom from the Holy Spirit who gives him these words to speak.
- Here's what I'm thinking; Paul is not just saying that the Savior has been sent as promised, but that the promised Savior has been sent.
- Lest you think this is a play on words it's not-here's why; it's crucial we not only present the Savior, but that we present the promise first.
- When Paul writes his letter to the church in Rome, he begins by doing exactly that when he mentions God's promise beforehand.

Roman 1:1-4 1:1 Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God- 2 the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures 3 regarding his Son, who as to his human nature was a descendant of David, 4 and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. NIV

- The “why” behind the “what” of presenting the Messiah as the promised Messiah is because it validates and authenticates God’s Word.
- When there’s communication of the promise first, then our presentation of the Savior becomes the prophetic fulfillment of that promise.

8. Preach the resurrection (Verse 8)

8 Why should any of you consider it incredible that God raises the dead?

- v8 Paul takes it to the next level when he asks why any of them would think it too incredible for God to raise someone from the dead.
- What’s Paul doing now? He’s preaching Christ and Him crucified by teaching the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.
- I suppose you could say that Paul is getting right to the point now as he repeats the very thing that got him in this mess to begin with.
- Perhaps the question is why does Paul say this again and why now? I believe that it’s not just what he says; it’s how he says it.
- Actually, he doesn’t even really say it, rather he asks about it. Notice that he brings up the resurrection, but it’s in the form of a question.
- Ok, why does he do this? Because, when you present a question to someone, whether it’s rhetorical or not, they will still try to answer it.
- In Paul’s letter to the Romans he presents five questions in four verses when writing about none other than Christ’s resurrection.

Romans 8:31-35 31 What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died-more than that, who was raised to life-is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. NIV

- When he asks why God would sparingly give to them and not spare giving His Son, they have to rethink the power of the resurrection.
- When he asks why it’s incredible for God to raise the dead, Agrippa has to rethink the power of God and the power of the resurrection.
- Why is the resurrection so powerful? Because, if He would do this for me, it means that God is for me and nothing can be against me.

One commentator said it best when he wrote; “Why should He care about us? The answer lies in the Cross. “If God did not spare His only Son that we might be saved, shall He not freely give us all things pertaining to life?” ... He will supply everything that’s good for me. How do I know? Because, He already gave me the very best when He gave me His Son, Christ Jesus.